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Pitching is probably the single most important thing that you can do once you've gotten in the door. —*Shonda Rhimes*

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CHAPTER RECAP

If you want truly see your TV show on air, you have to learn how to pitch it effectively. A great pitch is well-structured, visual, and quickly and easily conveys your show's concept and central characters. Here's a simplified guide to a good pitch:

- ▶ Start with the premise of your show
- ▶ Explain the world of your show
- ▶ Introduce your characters
- ▶ Explain what happens in the pilot
- ▶ Say it's going to be funny, moving, or romantic
- ▶ Talk about how many episodes you have planned
- ▶ Wrap it up and thank your listeners

You should be able to accomplish all of this in about 5-10 minutes.

Shonda warns against pitching specific actors or songs, because you never know the relationship the producer, the studio, or the network may have with that actor or musician. Maybe the artist you want to use in your pilot is too expensive. Maybe the studio has a bad impression of that particular actor. These thoughts may pull your listeners away from the main part of your pitch: your story. It never hurts to put yourself in the network or studio's position. Remember—they ultimately want a show they know they can sell and market to an audience. What creative ways can you describe your show in market-friendly terms?

SUBCHAPTERS

- ▶ How to Structure a Pitch
- ▶ Focus on Character
- ▶ Paint a Picture
- ▶ Don't Mention Actors or Music
- ▶ Make Your Pitch Market-Friendly
- ▶ Practice Your Pitch at Double-Time Speed
- ▶ Practice Your Pitch in Front of Friends
- ▶ Prepare a Mental Script When Meeting With Executives
- ▶ Shonda's Pitch for *Grey's Anatomy*
- ▶ Ultimately, It's About Your Writing Abilities

NOTES

08 PITCHING YOUR SHOW

SHONDA RHIMES TEACHES WRITING FOR TELEVISION 20

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Download and read Shonda's original pitch document for *Grey's Anatomy*. Study the language she uses to pitch the show, and how she walks the reader through the world of Seattle Grace Hospital.

ASSIGNMENT

- It's time to practice your pitch. Using MasterClass's rate and review tool, upload a video of your polished pitch for feedback from your classmates. Remember to think about the structure of your pitch and to speak visually.

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